

Message Text

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AMCONSUL MAZATLAN UNN

AMCONSUL MERIDA UNN

AMCONSUL MONTERREY UNN

AMCONSUL NUEVO LAREDO UNN

AMCONSUL TIJUANA UNN

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SUBJ: MONTHLY POLITICAL HIGHLIGHTS - JULY 1974

REF: MEXICO 5801

1. THIS TELEGRAM, THIRD IN AN EXPERIMENTAL SERIES, TREATS MAJOR POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN MEXICO DURING MONTH OF JULY 1974. THE POLITICAL STAR, PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA, WAS OF COURSE OUT OF THE COUNTRY DURING MOST OF THE MONTH VISITING SOUTH AMERICAN STATES (PLUS JAMAICA AS A FINAL FILLIP) AND HAMMERING AWAY AT SOME FAVORITE POLITICAL THEMES. THE FIGUEROA KIDNAPPING FLICKERED DIMLY IN THE PRESS THOUGH IT NO DOUBT CONTINUES TO BURN BRIGHTLY IN THE MINDS OF GOM
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LEADERS. THE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS ISSUE REMAINED A LIVE ISSUE

THOUGH TEMPORARILY IN SUSPENSE IN EXPECTATION OF A U.S. REPLY TO FONSEC RABASA'S NOTE OF JUNE 19. REVELATIONS OF EX-CIA EMPLOYEE PHILIP AGEE PROVIDED A FAT TARGET FOR THE PROFESSIONAL CRITICS OF THE U.S. AS WELL AS A FIELD DAY FOR MEXICAN POLITICOS WHO WISHED (TO MIX METAPHORS) TO GRIND AXES IN TROUBLED WATERS. THIS CABLE ALSO SUMMARIZES SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS OF A SERIES OF GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS THIS YEAR, A SUBJECT ADDRESSED IN GREATER DETAIL IN AN AIRGRAM POUCHED THIS WEEK.

2. THE PRESIDENTIAL TRIP: PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA (LEA) TELEGRAPHED MOST OF HIS PUNCHES IN A PRESS CONFERENCE ON JULY 6 (REPORTED BY EARLIER SEPTELS) SHORTLY BEFORE A VISIT TO ECUADOR, PERU, ARGENTINA, BRAZIL, VENEZUELA AND -- A LAST-MINUTE ADDITION -- JAMAICA. REPORTING FROM MISSIONS IN THE COUNTRIES VISITED HAS BEEN THOROUGH AND PERCEPTIVE. LEA HAS REPEATEDLY LAMBASTED THE "MORIBUND" OAS, PLUMPED FOR A LATIN AMERICAN ORGANIZATION TO DEFEND REGIONAL INTERESTS, LOBBIED FOR CUBAN READMISSION TO THE IA SYSTEM, PRESENTED MEXICO'S LOS POSITION AS "CONVERGENT" WITH THAT OF THE 200-MILE HARD-LINERS, ADVOCATED (WITH FINGERS CROSSED?) A FREE PRESS, AND GENERALLY ATTACKED THE "GREAT POWERS" AS ROADBLOCKS FOR LDC PROGRESS. HE SOFT-PEDALED THE CUBA ISSUE IN BRAZIL, THOUGH FONSEC RABASA (TO PRESS) INDICATED A FULL WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS THE MATTER IF THE GOB WISHED. CHARACTERISTICALLY, LEA SHRUGGED OFF PROTOCOL, WHERE POSSIBLE, AND -- ALSO TRUE TO FORM -- REVERTED TO THE DIDACTIC IN MANY CASES. HE TOOK CARE, HOWEVER, TO DENY ANY THOUGHT OF ASSUMING A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN LA. THE MEXICAN PRESS HAS GENERALLY -- AS USUAL -- PRESENTED THE TOUR AS MOMENTOUS. OTHER REPORTS REACHING US, HOWEVER, PORTRAY THE TOUR AS LESS THAN EPOCH-MAKING, INDICATE SOME UNHAPPINESS ON LEA'S PART AT THE RECEPTION HE HAS RECEIVED, DESCRIBE A DEPRESSED RABASA CONSIDERING RESIGNATION. EMBASSY WILL FORWARD A MORE DETAILED COMMENTARY WHEN ALL REPORTS ARE IN.

3. FIGUEROA CASE: THERE HAVE BEEN FEW SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CASE OF PRI CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR OF GUERRERO STATE, SEIZED BY GUERRILLA LEADER LUCIO CABANAS IN EARLY JUNE. DEFENSE OFFICIALS, GIVEN THE HORRENDOUS TASK OF RUNNING CONFIDENTIAL

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DOWN CABANAS IN THE WILDS OF THE GUERRERO SIERRA, ARE ON THE ONE HAND ASSERTING THAT CABANAS HAS CLEARLY FLED THE AREA, WHILE ON THE OTHER CONTINUING FRUITLESS EFFORTS TO FIND HIM. WE RATE THEIR CHANCES OF DOING SO AS VERY SLIGHT. THE PRI, MEANWHILE, WILL NOT RESOLVE THE ISSUE OF FIGUEROA'S CANDIDATURE UNTIL SEPTEMBER.

4. ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS: THIS PERENNIALY HOT AND TOUCHY

ISSUE HAS SIMMERED SINCE JUNE 19, AWAITING THE EMBASSY'S REPLY TO RABASA'S NOTE. AMBASSADOR JOVA DELIVERED THE REPLY TO ACTING FOREIGN SECRETARY GONZALEZ SOSA ON JULY 26, ALONG WITH ADVANCE COPIES OF AN EMBASSY PRESS RELEASE ON THE NOTE. GONZALEZ SOSA, AFTER CONSULTING WITH RABASA, REQUESTED RELEASE AWAIT RABASA'S RETURN ON JULY 31. IN THE MEANTIME, FONSEC ASSISTANT LEGAL ADVISOR BARONA LOBATO TOURED INS DETENTION CENTERS IN THE U.S., ON RABASA'S INSTRUCTIONS, AND THE SECRETARIAT PLANNED A MEETING OF MEXICAN CONSULAR OFFICIALS ASSIGNED TO THE WESTERN U.S. IN LOS ANGELES, AUGUST 6-7. (ON RETURN, BARONA LOBATO SAID THAT IT WAS NOT TRUE THAT ILLEGALS WERE BADLY TREATED IN DETENTION CENTERS.)

5. REVELATIONS OF AN OLYMPIC ATTACHE: ADVANCE PREVIEWS OF ASSERTIONS BY EX-CIA EMPLOYEE PHILIP AGEE IN A FORTHCOMING BOOK TOUCHED A GOOD MANY MEXICAN SENSITIVITIES. THOSE MEXICANS WHO CONSTANTLY DECRY THE IMPERIALISTIC SHENANIGANS OF THE USG IN MEXICO EXPRESSED CONSTERNATION AND SHOCK WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY DENYING THAT THEY WERE IN THE LEAST SURPRISED. PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA AND ATTORNEY GENERAL OJEDA PAULLADA, PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS TO COMMENT ON THE MATTER, DENIED THAT FOREIGN AGENTS OPERATE IN MEXICO. MOST OF THE HEAT GENERATED THUS FAR HAS BEEN BETWEEN POLITICAL LEADERS IN THE NATIONAL ACTION (PAN), POPULAR SOCIALIST (PPS), AND INSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTIONARY (PRI) PARTIES. THE FIRST TWO, IN PARTICULAR, ARE ATTEMPTING TO LINK EACH OTHER'S LEADERS WITH THE CIA.

6. GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS: TWELVE GOVERNORSHIPS IN MEXICAN STATES ARE AT STAKE IN 1974. (SOME OF THE ELECTIONS HAVE ALREADY BEEN HELD.) THE PRI (GOVERNMENT PARTY) INVARIABLY WINS AND THIS IS NOT THE YEAR THE SYSTEM WILL CHANGE. IF THE PRI HAS TO REPLACE FIGUEROA (SEE ABOVE),
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LIKELY CANDIDATE WILL BE SENATOR PINDARO URIOSTEGUI, WHO HAS HELD NUMEROUS FEDERAL-LEVEL POSTS AND, AS A SPELLBINDING ORATOR, ASSISTED IN THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS OF LOPEZ MATEOS, DIAZ ORDAZ, AND ECHEVERRIA. ONE NOTEWORTHY PRI SELECTION WAS THE CANDIDATE FOR SINALOA, SENATOR ALFONSO CALDERON VELARDE, A TOUGH POLITICIAN WITH A LABOR BACKGROUND WHO MAY BRING SOME IMPROVEMENT TO THE CORRUPT AND CHAOTIC SINALOA SCENE. A POINT OF GENERAL INTEREST IN THE PRI SELECTIONS THIS YEAR (VIA THE "DEDAZO", OR "FINGER" OF THE PRESIDENT AND HIS CHIEF ADVISORS) IS THE FACT THAT THE CANDIDATES ARE ON AN AVERAGE OLDER (60 VS 55) THAN THE EARLIER GENERATION OF GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES DURING THE LEA ADMINISTRATION, WHEN SOME CHOICES SEEMED CLEARLY GOVERNED BY THE RELATIVE YOUTH OF THOSE CHOSEN.
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